

James M. Aertsen

BISHOP WHITE'S OPINIONS

ON

INTERCHANGING WITH MINISTERS

OF

NON-EPISCOPAL COMMUNIONS.

EXTRACTED FROM

HIS CHARGES, ADDRESSES, SERMONS, AND
PASTORAL LETTERS.

RICHARD McCAULEY,

1314 CHESTNUT STREET, PHILADELPHIA.

1868.

FOR INQUIRE I PRAY THEE OF THE FORMER AGE,
AND PREPARE THYSELF TO THE SEARCH OF THEIR
FATHERS, FOR WE ARE BUT OF YESTERDAY, AND KNOW
NOTHING, BECAUSE OUR DAYS UPON EARTH ARE A
SHADOW: SHALL NOT THEY TEACH THEE, AND TELL
THEE, AND UTTER WORDS OUT OF THEIR HEART?—
JOB viii.; 8, 9, 10.

CHARACTER OF BISHOP WHITE.

BY

BISHOP ALONZO POTTER.

*Delivered on the occasion of laying the Corner stone of
Calvary Monumental Church, Philadelphia,*

APRIL, 1851.

“When such a man, bearing so many offices and sustaining relations so high and responsible, passed through more than fourscore years with an unspotted name, in the fearless discharge of every duty—and when the same man, called by Providence to take a *leading part in measures which were calculated to give cast and character through all time* to a large and important branch of the church universal—had been enabled to fill the post with surpassing wisdom and success, it was not too much to say that his memory deserved to be cherished with the fondest veneration. To allow it to be forgotten would be treason to every sentiment with which nature calls us to honor departed excellence; it would be most unthankful to God who had bequeathed to us the legacy of such services and such a name; and it would be robbing the young and ingenuous of future generations of an example peculiarly fitted to incite to worthy deeds of piety and philanthropy. * * * * *

“Bishop White’s was a character eminently worthy of study. He was without the salient points that most strike the eye of the casual observer, and he had not the splendor of genius which too often dazzles the world without essentially serving it. His was that harmonious development of moral and intellectual qualities which makes the best and most useful men.

With a happy natural disposition, with a noble person and fine health, he combined, from early youth, a conscientiousness and a spirit of self-culture, which crowned the gifts of nature with the graces of piety. No man ever passed through a course so long and eventful, more universally beloved for kindness and gentleness, or more honored for purity and unyielding integrity. With this claim to the affection and respect of men, he added a claim no less strong to their abiding and active co-operation, for he was firm of purpose, patient in dealing with obstacles, loyal through good and evil report to his convictions of duty, fearless of danger to life, person and reputation, and yet *eminently prudent and conciliatory*.

“His intellectual powers were not less worthy of honor. Gifted by nature with a sound judgment and with a truth-loving spirit, he cultivated habits of calm and profound reflection, and looked before and after with large discourse of reason. Though he passed his life in the midst of various and distracting cares, yet systematic industry combined with a tenacious memory, made him master of a large variety of learning; and as a theologian he reached an eminence which is not yet acknowledged, and which, measured by the standard of attainment then prevalent, and by the manifold disadvantages under which ministers of our Church everywhere labored, merits the highest praise. If his rhetorical powers had equalled his erudition, and his capacity for thought, and had we been ready to honor as we ought the writers of our own country, the name of White had now stood side by side with those of Secker and Porteus, of Horsley and Horne. * * The time, however, is coming, when Bishop White will be recognized as alike the *founder and wise master builder* of a system of Ecclesiastical Polity, which, though not faultless, is as perfect as the condition of things then admitted, and of which the essential excellence is likely to be demonstrated by the progress of events.”

After speaking of Washington's singular adaptation to *his* great work, and the impossibility of accounting for this on human principle, Bishop Potter goes on to say :

"It was the same with him who was called, *like another Moses, to lead our Church out of her long captivity, and through a wilderness of suffering and humiliation. He was sent of God.* He had a name against which reproach did not venture to whisper. He had a calmness and candor of mind, and a strength of judgment, which made him the rallying point of all who desired unity and reorganization. His mind was clear in its own conceptions, and settled in the conclusions to which he had been carried ; yet he was always ready, when he could do so without serious dereliction, to defer to the judgment and wishes of others. He had both prudence and courage, and he *was gifted in larger measure than almost any man of his day, with a clear and far-reaching foresight.*" * * * *

"This is not the place, nor is now the time in which to set forth the unyielding serenity of soul, the unfailing courtesy and kindness, the true modesty and self-forgetfulness, the calm sobriety of judgment, the independence of personal considerations, and the straightforward honesty and zeal which gradually won to him the confidence of all hearts, and which enabled him at length to secure the cordial acceptance of every important feature in his original plan. To develop these services in full, will be the duty of the future historian ; and upon that historian will devolve the grateful task of showing *how his steady hand guided the system as it went into operation ; and how, through the gracious goodness of God, he was permitted, for more than forty years, to be in every emergency its most honored and trusted administrator.*"

OPINIONS OF BISHOP WHITE

ON INTERCHANGING WITH

THE MINISTRY OF NON-EPISCOPAL COMMUNIONS.

The necessity constantly arises in the lapse of time, for laying again the foundations of the principles upon which the order and practice of the Church rest. In a busy, hurrying, and superficial age like the present, the common mind is not wont to take a calm, dispassionate, and *reasonable* view of any religious or ecclesiastical question. In the excitements of present controversies, and in deference to popular opinions, our people are too apt to forget the learning, wisdom, and solicitude of the "Fathers" who deliberately settled the foundations of that religious system which has hitherto been so blessed and prospered of God. No name stands higher among the founders of the American Episcopal Church than that of Bishop White, the first Bishop of Pennsylvania, and for forty years the Patriarch and presiding Bishop of the Church. His varied learning, his devoted piety, his wisdom and his *moderation* gave him almost unbounded influence in the early counsels of the Church, and multitudes of our communion have been in the habit of regarding his verdict on almost any point of Church doctrine or practice, an "end of controversy."

It is in view of these facts that the present effort is made, to show what were Bishop White's opinions on a subject now attracting great attention in the community—namely, the relation in which our ministry stands towards that of non-Episcopal bodies. The opinion seems to prevail to a considerable extent, that this is an unsettled question, and that we have no authoritative interpretation of constitution, canons or rubrics to guide us. As far as the first Bishop of Pennsylvania is concerned—who was perhaps the most influential of all, in the formation of our present ecclesiastical system—there is abundant evidence of the most positive opinions on this point, and also of great solicitude, that his opinions should be known and prevail in the Church, when he could no longer guide her counsels. If any one could know what was the true spirit and meaning of our canons and rubrics, and what practices the compilers of the Prayer Book meant to establish and sustain, *he* must have known; and to set up and defend at this distant day, practices against which he so repeatedly and so earnestly remonstrated, savours of a spirit of disrespect for authority, and a rashness in adherence to modern and novel innovations, that wise and thoughtful men will utterly put away from them, lest they become partakers in the sin of distracting or dividing the Church.

No argument for "Episcopacy or Apostolic succession," is here proposed, except as it is incidental to the Bishop's arguments. It is intended, chiefly, to give Bishop White's opinion on this one question of an "official recognition of, or an interchange with, a non-Episcopal ministry." We ask those who desire a new

practice on this point, to learn here what were the "old paths, where is the good way," with the hope that they will be content to walk therein, and that they "Shall find rest for their souls."

BISHOP WHITE'S FIRST CHARGE to his clergy in Convention, was in 1807, and on the subject of the ministry. On page 38 et. seq., he says: "The provision which I shall bring first to view, is the twenty-third article, declaring that 'it is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men, who have public authority given unto them, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard.' In this article, the sense of the church on the question—in whom the authority is vested, is left to be gathered from other of her institutions; but it is affirmed, that without the sanction of that authority, *there can be no commission and no right to the exercise of the ministry.*

* * * * *

"Her sense in this matter is grounded on the instances in scripture, of ordinations conducted under an authority external to those ordained; and on the circumstance, that, with the exception of those appointed by our Lord in person, not an instance can be produced of ordination in any other way, than by imposition of the hands of those duly authorized under a commission given by him to that effect.

There cannot be unknown to you the *intrusions which have taken place in some of our congregations; and the irregular practices attempted in others; in violation of the discipline derived from so high a source: And it may surely be expected of you to inculcate more correct senti-*

ments of the ministry, in your respective cures; and to discountenance the irregularities referred to, in any places where they may exist, and where your influence may extend.

On the subject of the episcopacy, your bishop will deliver his sentiments with the more confidence, from the consciousness, that he neither possesses nor desires any authority, besides such as may be exercised agreeably to known laws; from there being no reason to apprehend, that you, the presbyters of this church, have any inclination to prescribe to him undue limits; and from an inducement to explicitness in the circumstance, that the determinations of our church, on this particular point, have always appeared to him to be expressed *with extraordinary wisdom.*

The first source to which we are to direct our attention for her opinions, is her articles of religion: And the article in point is the thirty-sixth; which establishes 'the book of consecration of bishops, and the ordering of priests and deacons.' In this article, however, there is nothing further to our purpose, than its being the authority on which the ordinal is rested; and to which we are consequently directed for the church's sense of the episcopacy.

In the preface to that book, it is said to be 'evident unto all men, diligently reading holy scripture and ancient authors, that, from the Apostles' time, there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's church, bishops, priests, and deacons.' You see, that in the asserting of the three orders of the ministry, there is reference to two sources of proof; and the construction of the sentence requires the combining of them, for the establishment of the matter affirmed. There seems peculiar propriety, in exhibiting the subject in this form; since it precludes every objection which might otherwise be made, against our application of holy scripture to our purpose. For instance, if in our interpretation, of St. Paul's injunctions to Timothy

and to Titus, it be said, that this was an occasional superiority, connected with an especial mission of them as evangelists; and on a temporary delegation from the super-eminent authority of the Apostle; the construction is obviated by early records, testifying, that Timothy and Titus were Bishops, in the sense implying superiority of order. So, if the pre-eminence of St. James in the Church of Jerusalem, clearly seen in sundry passages of the Acts, should be conceived of as attached to his apostolic character, and not to be transmitted to another; the contrary is deduced from the like authority, which has left us a list of the bishops of that see, fifteen in number, from the beginning of the gospel to the entire destruction of the city. And in like manner, when we read, in the Apocalypse, the epistles to the seven churches of Asia, if a persuasion should be induced, that the angel of each church may have been a pastor, of no higher order than every pastor of every church; it is corrected by our finding, that in the next age, there were bishops in those churches, presiding over presbyters; which shows, that the regimen in the two ages must have been the same; unless there could be produced at least some slight circumstance, giving the idea of an intermediate change.

On this ground of scripture, as explained by antiquity, our church retains the succession of the episcopacy: And therefore she goes on in the preface to the ordinal, to decree, that no man shall be considered as a lawful minister within her pale, unless he be admitted according to the ensuing services; 'or hath had episcopal consecration or ordination.' Here, with laudable moderation, she abstains from censuring those churches, which, when the ordinal was compiled, had reformed without retaining the episcopacy. And there was the more reason for this, as many of them were in such circumstances, partly from the adherance of their prelates to the renounced subjection, and partly

from a connection with the civil polities of their respective states; that there seemed no medium between the course pursued and their returning to their former errors. But the English church, connecting her moderation with adherence to a primitive institution bestowed on her by a gracious Providence, determined, that none, not episcopally ordained, should officiate in her services. And thus was she compelled, in order to maintain consistency with a principle, not adopted in contradiction of others, yet not accommodating to their convenience, to re-ordain those whom she received from any non-episcopalian communion to her own. By which act, nothing more is necessarily implied, than that she supposes *an imperfection attendant on their former orders*; which she does not make a ground of the condemnation of others, *but which she will not allow of in herself*.

When we proceed from the preface of the ordinal, to the services of which it is composed; we find, (and this is all which I shall have occasion to cite from it) that in the invocations of the divine Being, he is addressed as, by 'his providence and by his holy spirit,' having 'appointed divers orders of ministry in the church;' the invocations being followed by prayers for the divine blessing on the persons to be ordained, according as they are to be deacons, or priests, or bishops. This presumes the fact affirmed in the preface, that the three *orders* were from the beginning. For although the apostles were doubtless guided by the holy spirit, to many acts intended to be of temporary effect; as in the mission of Barnabas and Paul, recorded in the thirteenth chapter of the Acts and in sundry designations to the office of an evangelist; yet the sense of the church, as expressed in those parts of her services, is clearly against the opinion of the introduction of episcopacy in a later age than the apostolic.

It is not an object with me, to allude to the opinions of other communions: And if I do it in this place, it

is merely that I may be the more clearly apprehended, as to a property of our own. The ablest of the non-episcopalian writers have dated the rise of the episcopacy in the second century.* Now if it could be believed, that, at a time when there was little intercourse besides that of mutual charity among the different churches of Christendom, such a change took place in them all, without any record of the steps which led to it, or of any dissensions produced by a considerable departure from practice so recently, and by so high authority established; still, the contrary would be a position which our church maintains: And accordingly, this is a property of her system, *which every one of her ministers, while he continues such, is bound to carry into effect, in all the obvious consequences resulting from it.* Let it not be thought, that there is any interference of this, with the sacred claims of

* The Bishop adds the following note on Lord King's celebrated book, defending the position that all Presbyters were of the same order, the *Bishop* being simply an overseer or superintendant, to whom the others were assistants. "The author of the present performance thought he had no need to refer to the principle above stated, as it seems to him to have little weight among men of literary reputation, of communions professedly non-episcopalian. And besides, he has never, met with any person who had read Lord King's book and the reverend Mr. Slater's answer to it, who did not appear sufficiently secured by the latter, against any undue impressions, which might otherwise have been a consequence of the other.

It is indeed surprising that a gentleman who lived to fill the first law office of England should, even in his early years, have sent from under his pen a book so unsound in principle, and so full of misquotations and mistranslations: And it will be a remarkable fact in the ecclesiastical history of this country, that disregard of the episcopal succession, in the framing of the ministry of a very numerous society, was owing to conviction received from the said book; composed by a young man of the age of twenty-two; answered with great ability near the time of its appearance; and not since defended by the author or by any other person. The fact alluded to appears in an instrument from under the hand of the late reverend John Wesley, set forth at the time of his authorizing of ordinations in America."

Charity. For if those *claims are to set aside whatever distinguishes us from many whom we cannot but esteem and love ; and of whose Christian temper and conduct we must have had ample evidence ; there is not any one of our services, or either of our sacraments, which we shall retain.* In the usual intercourses of social life, there are many opportunities of manifesting the spirit of Christian charity : And even in regard to difference of religious sentiment, it is better manifested by respect and candor ; and especially by the preventing of the intrusion of our angry passions within the sacred sphere of the discussion of religious truth, than by an accomodation which *destroys order.* And indeed this, while its professed object is love and peace, is *frequently the occasion of divisions, more and worse than those which it is solicitous to remove.*

In regard to what I have now laid before you on the subject of the episcopacy ; and indeed to all other particulars of this discourse, comprehended in the institutions of *our church* ; I ought not to fail to remind you of two very solemn engagements, by which she binds her ministry to a submission to them. One of these engagements, is the promise privately signed in the presence of the bishop, previously to ordination. The other is the answer to a question, which he proposes publicly in the service. *The former stipulates for a conformity to the doctrines and the worship of our church ; and the latter is a vow of canonical obedience to the bishop. Neither of these pledges can be misunderstood. It would be a desertion of duty, not to require compliance with regulations for the enforcing of which an important trust has been bestowed. Accordingly, what has been delivered is under the sanction of all that may reasonably be considered as attached to the episcopal office ; and included in the species of admonition and of judgment, contemplated by the service of ordination."*

THE PASTORAL LETTER of the House of Bishops, of 1817, written and signed by Bishop White, reads as follows :

“There are religious communions, not bordering on either of these extremes, and, at the same time, consenting with us in so many points, as occasionally to induce the wish of worthy persons among them, as of such persons among ourselves, that there may be an occasional intercommunity of services: it being presumed, that in such an intercourse, the peculiarities of the respective systems are to be lost sight of. On this subject, we owe to the members of our Church an exposition of our sentiments, and of the grounds on which they rest. We shall consider the matter, as it respects the Christian Ministry, Worship, and Doctrine: the arrangement being adjusted to the prominence and the frequency of occurrence of the desire referred to of our losing sight of the properties of the respective systems.

On the point of the Ministry, it is well known, that our Church ascribes great importance to the position, that ‘from the Apostles’ time, there have been in the Church of Christ the three orders, of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons:’ And she presumes, that this is ‘evident from Scripture and from the writings of the early Fathers.’ We are aware, that this has been denied to have been the opinion of the Church of England, at the period of the Reformation. But it was at this period that the Ordinal, from which the words are quoted, was composed; and the sense of them might be corroborated by citations from the writings of very early Divines. This is not an occasion on which it will be expected of us to go into a proof of the original institution of Episcopacy. *It is sufficient for the present purpose, that we believe it to have been coeval with Christianity; and to have continued in the Church universally, for the space of about 1500 years. If this be our belief, how*

is it possible that we can officially recognize the organizing of non-episcopalian congregations, and the administering of the ordinances by a non-episcopalian ministry? We may esteem the persons, we may respect the talents, and we may rejoice in the usefulness of such a ministry, in proportion as there may be a ground for any or for all of this, in what passes around us in the world. We are free to declare, each of us for himself, that there is a tribute due from us under each of the heads enumerated. But we have a trust committed to us, which cannot be lost in those affections of the mind. We are aware of imperious circumstances in some places, and of prejudices arising out of existing habits in others, which have combined to impair the integrity of Christian discipline in this particular. But while these considerations confirm us in the disposition, which we cultivate on other accounts, of avoiding the casting of reproach and censure, they do not extend to the justifying of us, in countenancing such an inroad on the constitution of the Church of Christ. It is on this ground that we keep ourselves at a distance from all efforts for the encouraging of a ministry not Episcopal, and for sanctioning its agency in the Sacraments and other ordinances of the Church. * * * *

“On the ground of the statements now made, we take occasion to press on the members of our Church generally, adherence to her institutions. It requires but little consideration to foresee, that there is no security for the permanency of any of them, if they are to give way in part, in one congregation and in another within our pale, at the inconsiderate desire of persons, who, under the prospect of melioration, may soon have occasion to lament, that the result of their endeavors has been the opposite to what they had imagined. This is especially likely to happen, and has sometimes happened, in consequence of the very expedient, against which we have been here endeavoring to erect a bar. On the happening of disappointments in this respect,

we were not disposed to lament the issue; when we considered, that for the accomplishing of such an amalgamation as is affected by some, *it would be necessary for us to sacrifice our views of the Christian Ministry, of the Sacraments, of Christian Worship, of the operations of Divine Grace, and of the extent of the mercies of God to a sinful world.* * * * *

“Even where no spiritual truth is denied, and no unscriptural dogma is obtruded, we foresee, as the consequence of the intermixture of ministry, the introduction of various matters, so unsuitable to the species of devotion of which we have specimens in the Scriptures, to the remains of the piety of primitive antiquity, and to what has been transmitted to us through the channel of the Church of England; that neither of them can be acceptable to the same persons, or long be a property of the same communion.”*

THE PASTORAL LETTER of 1823, also written by Bishop White, contains the following sentiment:†

“If it should seem to any, that, for the ‘following of peace with all men’” there should be an abandonment of those properties of our Church, *which we believe to have descended to us from the earliest and best ages; such compliance would not only be contrary to obligations most solemnly assumed, but, far from promoting the proposed object of conciliation, would be more operative than any other cause that can be imagined, to the opening of a door for the hydra of religious controversy.*

The wisest and the most Christian course that can be pursued by us, is to conduct the concerns of our Church agreeably to its matured and long existing institutions, and under the sense of responsibility to its divine Head; *but without reference to others* professing

* The Bishops constituting this “House” were Bishops White, Hobart, Griswold, Dehon, Moore, Kemp, and Croes.

† The Bishops constituting this House were Bishop White, Griswold, Kemp, Croes, Bowen, Brownell, and Ravenscroft.

to worship the same God through the merits of the same Redeemer: except to put the most favorable construction on their acts, to rejoice in any good resulting from them, and scrupulously to avoid whatever may have a tendency to excite angry passions, either in them or in ourselves."

IN A SERMON preached in St. Stephen's Church, Philadelphia, Sept. 25, 1825, on the occasion of an ordination, on the text, 1 Cor. III. 11-16: "For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid," &c., the Bishop says:

"It has pleased the great head of the church, to commit the preaching of the word and the administration of the Sacraments to an authorized ministry. Accordingly; all violation of this order, may be considered as figured by 'the wood, the hay and the stubble.' Where this is done under knowledge of what the scriptures enjoin, and from disregard of that high authority, the indulgence in the text does not extend; and it can have no place, except in the case of involuntary error and unperceived frailty.

The divine institution of the ministry is as conspicuous a fact, as any in sacred history. When our Saviour gave his commission—'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,' it was not to his disciples at large, but to those whom he had before appointed his apostles. They, perceiving the expediency of filling the place 'from which Judas by transgression fell,' referred the choice of a successor to divine determination. It does not appear, that either Matthias thus appointed, or that St. Paul, who was afterwards appointed by a voice from heaven, was initiated to his office by the imposition of hands: and why should they, when they had been vested with it, in like manner as their fellow apostles? But all subsequent introduction to the ministry, was by the *hands of and in succession from the apostles, thus divinely designated.*

Timothy, who, like the apostles, was admitted to the exercise of a general jurisdiction, is said by St. Paul to have received the gift of the ministry, by 'the putting on of his hands:' and it appears, that 'the ordaining of elders in every city,' was by the *hands either of the apostles, or of those to whom the power of ordination had been committed by them*. If any inquiry be made as to the time to which this order was to continue; the duration of it is defined in the act of Christ's giving of his commission to his apostles; being expressed in the promise—'lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'

On such ground, is it arrogant, is it unreasonable *in the ministers of the gospel, to assert the divine institution of their office, as handed down from the apostles; and to deny the propriety of every door to the ministry of man's workmanship; whether it be that of popular ordination, or the plea of an inward call?* It cannot be. St. Paul has set us an example in this matter, when he 'magnified his office.' We, while we abase ourselves, may magnify ours: and much more, may we avoid the countenancing of any thing which has a tendency to destroy or to disparage it."

THE PASTORAL LETTER of 1832, written by the same author reads as follows:

"It has pleased God in his providence, to permit the variety of profession, abounding in the Christian world. With us it rests, while we adhere to the principles transmitted to us from the purest ages; for a long time blended with dogmas and with practices not warranted by an early origin; but at last disencumbered of such extraneous matter; and coming to us through the channel of the church of England; to perpetuate the same, without accommodating to other communions in any important points; not excepting such as are left to human discretion, when no good is to be thereby answered.

There are often persons of other denominations, who, with the concurrence of some, perhaps well-meaning, but, as we think, mistaken, members of our Church, are forward in projecting, and in carrying into operation, expedients of combination, for the inculcating of what they think the only essential truths of the Gospel, detached from the diversities which characterize the discordant theories; and as they suppose, may be lost sight of, in the common object of evangelical instruction. *Against such amalgamation we hold ourselves bound in conscience, to declare our decided disapprobation.*

1st, We do not perceive that a minister of the Gospel can lawfully bind himself under the tie of a voluntary association, intended to cover with the mantle of silence, any matter resting on Gospel verity, and contributing to the sustaining of it; especially when he is bound to inculcate the same, by an obligation laid on him in the promises made at his ordination, on every occasion, opening a prospect of doing so with success. 2dly, So far as the experience and observation of the most of us have extended, in relation to the associations now contemplated, the assurances pledged by them are not generally fulfilled. A sectarian spirit has sometimes showed its head. Individuals of them, and sometimes the associated bodies, perhaps unconsciously, have introduced into their acts some matters in contrariety to the known tenets of the Episcopal Church; the members of which are thus insensibly drawn to set light by the doctrines of her communion. 3dly, It has the effect of bringing into view such litigated points in unorganized Christian intercourse, and in the courteous interchange of the civilities of social life, as tend to the generating of angry feeling. *It is a much better expedient for the maintaining of peace and of friendly offices among different denominations, that each of them should sustain the cause of God and of godliness, by such means as are presented by their peculiar organizations; exercising toward every other all the forbearance and all the charity which may reasonably be exacted by a regard*

*to the fallibility of the human understanding, and by the workings of unperceived prejudice, in ourselves, and in others with whom we have to do; and all the esteem which may be thought due to any virtues which they may possess, or to any good deeds which they may perform. This is a species of charity, which may be maintained without the abandonment of principle."**

IN HIS CHARGE TO THE CONVENTION of 1822, Bishop White treats of the "intermixture of administrations, in what concerns the faith, or the worship, or the discipline of the Church," as follows:

"There is a subject on which your bishop wishes to record his opinion, matured by the long experience of his ministry, and acted on by him, as he thinks, to the advantage of the church. It is the conduct becoming us towards those of our fellow-christians who are severed from us by diversity of worship, or of discipline; and in some instances, by material contrariety on points of doctrine.

The conduct to be recommended, is, to treat every denomination, in their character as a body, with respect; and the individuals composing it with degrees of respect, or of esteem, or of affection, in proportion to the ideas entertained of their respective merits; and, *to avoid all intermixture of administrations in what concerns the faith, or the worship, or the discipline of the church.*

On the conduct to be observed towards every denomination, it is not intended to recommend silence concerning any religious truth, from the mistaken delicacy of avoiding offence to opposing error; nor to censure the exposing of the error, if it be done in a christian spirit, and in accommodation to time and place. To take offence at this, is to manifest the spirit of persecution, under circumstances which have

* The Bishops constituting this House were Bishops White, Griswold, Bowen, Brownell, Onderdonk of Pennsylvania, Meade, Stone, Onderdonk of New York, Ives, Hopkins, Smith, McIlvaine, and Doane.

happily disarmed it of power. But when, instead of argument, or in designed aid of it, there is resort to misrepresentation and abuse; or, when the supposed consequences of an opinion are charged as the admitted sentiments of the maintainer of it; these are weapons as much at the service of error, as at that of truth; are the oftenest resorted to by the former, and are calculated to act on intelligent and ingenuous minds, as reason of distrust of any cause in which they may be employed.

It is no small aggravation of the evil, that it tends to retard the time, which we trust will at last be brought about by the providence of God; when, in consequence of friendly communications, arising out of the ordinary intercourses and charities of life, there will be such an approximation of religious societies in whatever can be thought essential to communion, as that they shall 'with one heart and one mouth glorify God.' For, to those who have attended to the first workings of what has ended in the divisions and subdivisions among christian people, it must have been evident, at least in the greater number of instances, that with diversity of sentiment, there might have continued the 'Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace,' had it not been for the intrusion of personal injury, or provocation, the effects of passion or of interfering interests, which have sometimes insensibly induced the persuasion of service done to the cause of God, when in fact, human views had a dominant share in determining the conduct.

There has been referred to, in favour of the point sustained, the danger of exciting and increasing unfriendly feeling between differing denominations. It is on this principle—although there are other considerations tending to the same effect—that *your bishop has resisted all endeavors for an intermixture of administrations, in what concerns the faith, or the worship, or the discipline of the church.* In every known instance, in which it has proceeded from the usurpation of authority

by individuals, it has been productive of conflicting opinion, and of needless controversy. On some occasions, our institutions have been treated with disrespect, and doctrines unknown in them have been taught, within our walls. There have even been advanced claims of rights, to what was granted as temporary indulgence; and thus our property in religious houses has been rendered insecure: all under the notion of liberality and christian union. It would be painful to have it supposed, that any reference is here had to the many respectable ministers of other denominations whose characters are in contrariety to the offences stated. Of the intrusion of such men, there is no apprehension entertained at present: *and if the door should hereafter be thrown open, the most forward to enter in would be persons of the most moderate pretensions in talent and in acquirement.*

It is confidently believed, that what is now said, would not be offensive to the more respectable and prominent persons, whether clerical or lay, in the concerns of other religious societies; who would probably concur in the declaration, that the contrary assumption, when carried into effect, in opposition to the governing authority in any religious denomination, is the intolerance, which, in former ages, pursued its designs by penal laws; but is now reduced to the necessity of making hollow professions of fraternity: the object being the same, with difference only in the means. By any among ourselves favoring such designs, for what they may conceive to be a righteous end; it should be considered, that, however commendable the being 'zealously affected,' there is the qualification of 'a good thing;' and *that there can be no goodness in what is contrary to modesty and tends to unnecessary controversy and division: for, if the attempted intermixture should be accomplished, there must be the severance of those who would 'seek the old paths,' not without sensibility to the hinderances opposed to the 'walking in them.'* Thus, there would be an increase of

division, growing out of what had been professedly undertaken for the healing of it.

It is difficult to be on the present subject, without giving occasion to the injurious charge of bigotted attachment to our communion: to guard against which, consistently with the knowledge of decided preference, it may be expedient to be more particular.

Our church calls herself Episcopal. She affirms Episcopacy to rest on scriptural institution, and to have subsisted from the beginning. On the varying governments of other societies, she pronounces no judgment. *The question is, not whether we think correctly, but whether we are to be tolerated in what we think. If this be determined in the affirmative, we must, to be consistent, interdict all other than an episcopalian ministry, within our bounds.*

Again; our church is decidedly in favor of a form of prayer, believing it to be sanctioned by divine ordainment under the law; by the attendance of our Saviour and of his apostles, on composed forms in the synagogues and in the temple; and by indications of their being in use in the primitive church. We do not judge harshly of the public prayers of our fellow-christians; but we allege, that among ourselves, the people are not to be dependent on the occasional feelings, or the discretion, or the degree of cultivation of an officiating minister. *With such views, it is contrary to what we owe to the edification of the people, were we to give way to the introduction of the latter species of devotion.*

Once more. That our Church teaches the doctrines of grace, and holds them to be of paramount importance, is obvious to all. Man's utter want of righteousness by nature; his absolute incapacity of merit, whether in the state of nature, or in that of grace; his being under the government of passions impelling to sin, any further than as counteracted by principles derived from grace; the agency of the Holy Spirit in this, going before, that he may have a good will and working with him in the exercise of it; and finally the

meritorious ground of all benefit, in the propitiatory offering of the Redeemer; are not only affirmed in our institutions, but pervade them. We rejoice, so far as any of our fellow christians consent with us in acknowledging the said essential truths of scripture. But in some public confessions, we think we find embodied with those truths, dogmas neither revealed in scripture, nor deducible from its contents: and, in some instances, contradicting what our church explicitly teaches. *The introducing of such matter among ourselves, is what we cannot countenance: and introduced it would be, under the intermixture here objected to.* Of this we have had instances, where an alien agency has been intruded: and, if it should be countenanced, the consequences would be in the greatest degree injurious.

If, after all, there should be a leaping in any mind to the plausible plea of liberality, let there be an appeal to the fact, which will bear a strict investigation, *that every proposal to the purpose, when explained, amounts to the surrendering of one, and of another of our institutions, without conformity to them in any instance.*

“Brethren—

“It is fit, that there should be explicitly declared, the motive for the present expression of opinion. *It has been confidently acted on by the deliverer of it, in alliance with esteem for worth, in whatever individual or body of men it was discerned to reside. It cannot be expected, that he will continue much longer to sustain any of his opinions, either by argument, or by example. He hopes, that they who may be expected to survive him, entertain similar views of what the exigences, and even the existence of our church require. But, lest an effort to the contrary should hereafter be made by any, he wishes to oppose to it, and to leave behind him his premonition; and to attach to it whatever weight, if there should be any, may be thought due to his long experience and observation. Under this impression, he has made it a part of his official address, to appear, for the purpose stated, on your journal.*”

In his ADDRESS to the special convention of 1826, called together for the purpose of electing an Assistant Bishop, Bishop White says—in speaking of what he considered the proper qualifications for the Episcopal Office:

“The remaining point, is attachment and conformity to the institutions of our church, in doctrine, in worship, and in ecclesiastical constitution and government: a statement so far from being inconsistent with liberality to forms of profession preferred by our fellow christians of various denominations, that it is the only ground, on which peace and mutual good-will between us can be maintained. On this ground, he who addresses you has acted for more than half a century. He thinks that he has found the fruit of it, in the friendships of many wise and pious persons, whose sentiments on some points, differ materially from his own: whereas, had their theories been brought into collision in discourses under the same roof, there is no knowing in what degree there might have been the excitement of unamiable sensations, nor to what extent the consequences might have been injurious.” After speaking of the relation of this subject to “the integrity of the faith,” and of the “great stress the church lays on the worshipping of God in a prescribed form of prayer,” the Bishop goes on to say—“in addition, we have received the three orders of the ministry, instituted by the Apostles, and universally retained for about 1500 years from the beginning; and while we pass no judgment on what we consider the more modern ministrations of our fellow christians, we do not think ourselves at liberty to admit them within our pale. The enumerated particulars have been cherished by us; first during our dependence on our mother church of England; and since from the beginning of our ecclesiastical organization. Could it be supposed probable that there will be hereafter a bishop of this diocese, who shall, either openly oppose himself to the re-

ceived properties of our communion; or, endeavour to undermine them insidiously, and by degrees, heavy will be his responsibility. Should his talents be equal to the meditated undertaking, he may distract and divide the Church; but he will not consummate his work, and the old paths will be still sought by those who have walked in them, and to whom they have been endeared; and who may perhaps, by a steady perseverance regain their rights, after experience of the results, and of a manifestation of the spirit which has produced it." * * * * * "Having been so long occupied in sustaining the principles which have been detailed, and being desirous of continuing his testimony, wherever it shall be especially called for, he has conceived of the present as an opportunity not to be unimproved. Could he foresee, that during his episcopacy, either now or at any future time, the stated points will be either dismissed or disregarded, he would make some such request as that of Hagar in the wilderness, in reference to what has been so long an object of his anxieties, of his prayers, and of his exertions: "LET ME NOT SEE THE DEATH OF THE CHILD."—*Journal of Special Convention, 1826, p. 22, et seq.*

A small printed copy of the *two* addresses of Bishop White to this special convention of 1826—now in possession of one of his descendants—is accompanied with a manuscript *appendix*, in the Bishop's own handwriting, in which he explains more fully the grounds of his apprehensions in regard to the choice of an Assistant Bishop. In this *appendix* he says, "What has been said on page the 15th, may be considered as manifesting the apprehensions of an improper choice. That the danger of this is a subject of solicitation with me, must be acknowledged; and it rests on what I have heard from some of my brethren of the clergy. *I have heard distinctly advocated the expediency of introducing the ministers of other denominations into our churches, and the same has been attempted.*"

The Bishop then refers to other practices and opinions of which he is *apprehensive*, and instances the “introduction of camp meetings among us”—“meetings for prayer conducted under the influence of the ministers of our Church, unconnected with her services, in which young converts were set to lead in religious exercises”—the denial of the requisite of “human learning as a qualification for the ministry” &c.

In a series of notes to this “appendix” marked “to be produced as authorities if necessary” the Bishop gives the authority for each one of the statements he makes. In reference to that concerning “the introduction of ministers of other denominations into our churches” he says—“the Rev. A. B., a few years ago, on an occasion of my expostulating with him for his setting of an anti-episcopalian minister to address his congregation in ——— Hall, acknowledged his opinion to be in favor of such attentions to ministers of other denominations, even in our churches. I have since been informed by a member of his vestry, that they rejected his application for the admission of Mr. ———, a missionary of the society for unconverted Jews.”

This “Appendix,” after enlarging somewhat upon the efforts to draw away the members of the Church from her well known practices, and the dangers of innovations, closes as follows, with the Bishop’s well known signature subscribed—“It has been asked whether I am apprehensive of a secession in the present instance? My answer has been, that the apprehended danger is of a different description. It is there being in the counsels of the union, such an ascendancy of doctrines and practices brought from other denominations, as would give to our Church a different cast of character from that which she has

hitherto maintained. This is done under the profession of bringing us to a stricter adherence to evangelical doctrine, and of elevating us to a higher grade of piety. May the blessing of God rest on all *suitable* endeavors for the accomplishing of these objects! That there is a call for them cannot well be denied. On the contrary that some good has resulted from them, may be admitted; and in this I rejoice, notwithstanding some crooked counsels, and some acts not consistent with Godly sincerity, which have been witnessed in the process; and the disapprobation of which, although it should fall principally on the immediate agents, cannot but extend in a degree to those who participate with them in their views. The matter contended for, is, that the professed object does not warrant a deterioration of our doctrine, or of our worship, or of our ecclesiastical constitution and government. That important innovations are contemplated, is with me a known fact, and a subject of painful solicitude. Whether the work will be consummated, and whether in the event of disappointment, a schism will be the consequence, must be left to be determined by time."

Much fuller extracts might be made from the writings of Bishop White, to show how clear and positive he was upon the point of *non-intercourse in the offices of the ministry*, with those who were "anti-episcopalians." But these are deemed all-sufficient for the purpose in hand. They are indeed more than sufficient, to show, that with this wise, moderate, and most *charitable* Bishop, this was a subject of "painful solicitude." He foresaw that discord, dissension, and unnumbered evils would come by a departure in this respect from the principles and practices upon which the Church was first founded. Again and again he returns to this subject, and with great solemnity puts on record those opinions, which he hopes will guide

and control the Church he so dearly loved, when his voice shall no more be heard in her counsels.

Similar sentiments were as fully expressed by other Bishops, who were his contemporaries, and who were equally solicitous for the preservation of the faith and order of the Church, which they had good reasons for embracing and upholding. With these, however, we are not at present concerned. We write *first* and *chiefly* for *Pennsylvania* churchmen, among whom the name of Bishop White is held in high esteem, and where his opinions and practices have always been regarded almost as a *law*, not to be spoken against. If the verbal opinion of later Bishops, who were all unconcerned in settling the foundations of our Church, is thought of such value, at second or third hand, in interpreting the force of a canon, from its history, of how much greater weight should be this *clear, unequivocal, repeated* opinion of this *Patriarch* of our Church, who knew so well the things whereof he affirmed?

We ask *Pennsylvania* churchmen then, to consider well the opinions and testimony of this wise and Godly Bishop, before they commit themselves to any opinions or practices, in regard to *official* intercourse with a non-episcopal ministry, contrary to the traditions which we have received of the Fathers. With the doctrines and opinions of other christians, honored for their piety, zeal and good works, we here enter into no controversy. Our sole purpose is to show that according to the principles upon which our Church was founded, as represented in the writings and practices of the first Bishop of *Pennsylvania*, it was never intended that there should be such official intercourse.

Every religious body has its distinguishing peculiarities. *One* of ours is that we know only a ministry of *Episcopal* origin.

1859 In submitting the above, as the opinions of Bishop White, we are well aware of his publication of a pamphlet in the year 1782, with the title of "The Case of the Episcopal Churches in the United States Considered," which was re-published in Philadelphia from 1224 Chestnut Street, in 1829, with the title of "Bishop White on Episcopacy." It has been thought by some, that the principles set forth in that publication were not consistent with such views of the christian ministry as he was supposed to hold, and as are so clearly declared in the extracts given above, from his writings. We have, however, on record, the Bishop's own explanation of the circumstances under which that pamphlet was written, and his positive declaration that he considered it *not* inconsistent with the views of Episcopacy, and of the relations of Episcopal Ministers to those of other religious bodies, which he afterward held and taught. And how that pamphlet, can be considered to be a representation of the Bishop's views on "Episcopacy," without reference to his own explanation of its intent and meaning, is hard to conceive. The *Appendix* to his first charge to his clergy in 1807, which treats so fully of the ministry, contains the history of that celebrated publication, which the author says he gives "principally for the information of his clerical brethren, whom it concerns, so far as they may be desirous of a consistency of conduct in their Bishop."

He then goes on to give "an epitome of the publication and the motive to it" as follows:—"It began

with stating certain changes in the form of the episcopal church ; *Not affecting principle*, but dictated by a change of circumstances. There followed a scheme for the organization of representative bodies of our church, on principles similar to those which have been since adopted, and are now acted on. This scheme included a superiority in each district of one clergyman over the others. But as the episcopal succession could not at the time be obtained, the pamphlet recommended to include in the proposed frame of government a general approbation of episcopacy, and a declaration of our intention to procure the succession as soon as conveniently may be ; but in the meantime, to carry the plan into effect without waiting for the succession."

The Bishop then states the "motive for this proposal" to have been the declining condition of our Church, and the fear of its extinction, and gives the history of his withdrawing the pamphlet from the public as soon as the prospect of peace became known. This he gives more succinctly perhaps in a manuscript note in his own handwriting, on a copy of his charge of 1832, now in the possession of a member of his family. In this he says, "the circumstances attached to that publication are the following. The congregations of our communion throughout the United States, were approaching to annihilation. Although within this city, three episcopal clergymen, including the author, were resident and officiating ; the Church over the rest of the state had become deprived of their clergy during the war, either by death, or departure for England. In the Eastern States, with two or three exceptions, there was a cessation of the exercises of the pulpit ; owing to the necessary disuse of the prayers for the former civil rulers. In Maryland and in Virginia, where the Church had enjoyed civil establishments, on the ceasing of these, the incumbents of the parishes, almost without an exception, ceased to officiate. Further South, the condition of the Church

was not better, to say the least. At the time in question, there had occurred some circumstances which prompted the hope of a discontinuance of the war, but that it would be with the acknowledgment of American Independence there was little reason to expect. On the 8th of August, 1782, the Congress, as noticed on their printed journal of that day, received a communication from Sir Guy Carleton and Admiral Digby, dated the 2d of that month, which gave the first opening of the prospect of peace. The pamphlet had been advertised for sale in the *Pennsylvania Packet* of the *Sixth*, and some copies had been previously handed by the author to a few of his friends. *This suspended the intended proceedings in the business, which in the opinion of the author, would have been justified by necessity, and by no other consideration.*

There was an opinion commonly entertained, that if there should be a discontinuance of military operations, it would be without the acknowledgment of Independence, as happened after the severance of the Netherlands, from the crown of Spain. Of the like issue there seemed probable causes, in the feelings attendant on disappointed efforts for conquest; and in the belief cherished, that the successes of the former colonists would be followed by dissensions inducing return to the domination of the mother country. Had the war ended in that way, our obtaining of the succession from England would have been hopeless.

The remnant of the Episcopal Church in Scotland laboring under penal laws not executed, would hardly have hazarded the bringing down on themselves of the arm of Government. Fear of the like offence, would have operated in any other quarter to which we might have had recourse. In such a case, the obtaining of the succession in time to save from ruin, would seem to have been impossible."

In closing the *printed Appendix* quoted from above, the Bishop says: "In the bringing of the subject before the public, there was no argument in proof of

the claims of Episcopacy. The reason was, that the time and the subject rendered the occasion the most improper that could have been taken for such a challenge of controversy. To have addressed ourselves in any shape to our fellow christians of other communions would have given scope to a disposition, if it existed in any, to intermeddle in our concerns. Not only so, if any among ourselves had been tempted to found a popularity on a levelling of the ministerial orders; and of this there existed some apprehensions; the safest way, in regard to them, was to consider the principle of the Episcopacy, as not subject to argument and decision by vote; as involved in the very terms on which our societies had been constituted, and the houses belonging to them built; and therefore as not to be relinquished but by those who should see cause to relinquish the communion."

* * * * * "To those who judged the proposed expedient inadmissable in any extremity, and who may happen to peruse this appendix, the author says no more than what may prevent representations, founded on a mistake of the time when the proposal was made. To those, who being adverse to the apostolic origin of Episcopacy, *have considered him as having consented with them in opinion; he is ready to declare on every suitable opportunity, that the contrary was intended to be implied, and that it is obvious according to his conceptions, on the face of the performance.*"*

We think these extracts are abundantly sufficient to show the true nature of this proposal. It is declared to be a plan for saving the Church from ruin, in what was thought its last extremity. Happily, the necessity did not arise. *Two days* after the pamphlet was advertised, and *before* it was given to the public,

* An explanation of the history and purpose of this *pamphlet*, similar to the above, though not so full, may be seen in the *Memoirs of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, pp. 90 & 91.

news came of the prospect of peace, and the consequent opening for obtaining the succession, *and immediately the "intended proceedings were suspended."*

The Bishop declares that his plan had no bearing on the question of *Episcopacy*, and that it was not inconsistent with his views of its "apostolic origin." It was a plan to meet a *threatened emergency*. The emergency never came, and the plan was never adopted. What possible bearing can it have upon that condition of things where such an emergency neither exists nor is threatened? An apostolic ministry has existed in this country for eighty years, within the reach of all, in regard to which this Bishop has spoken most fully and emphatically. His views of a plan to be pursued in a case where such a ministry was *impossible*, have therefore no bearing whatever upon this question, and to call the publication in which they were set forth, "BISHOP WHITE ON EPISCOPACY"! seems to us a manifest misnomer, which has led to great misunderstanding and misrepresentation of his opinions. There are doubtless many among us who would not agree with him in the wisdom or propriety of his plan, and who are thankful—as we may be well assured he was—that the threatened "necessity" did not arise; while we still claim his testimony to be unvarying on the apostolic origin of an Episcopal Ministry, and the unlawfulness of any official recognition of any other. We also claim with him, that *we can, and do* hold these opinions with perfect respect, for those of our fellow christians who differ from us in these particulars, and without any violation of the spirit of *true charity*. Believing this to be an original

part of the divine economy for the salvation of men, *necessity* is laid upon us to teach and maintain it. And *we do not allow* that our views are "uncharitable" or "illiberal" in any sense. They are no more "uncharitable," or "illiberal," or "exclusive" than the peculiar views of numbers of other religious bodies about us, against whom no such charges are commonly made.

The Society of Friends, among whom are to be found large numbers of the most respectable and worthy people in our land, allow of no official recognition of *any ministry* but their own. So jealous are they of their peculiar views; so necessary do they esteem them to be to the preservation of that which they deem the *true* system, that they will not allow the *marriage* of one of their members with a member of *any other Christian communion*. A very large body of christians in this country, of a most zealous and aggressive spirit, hold that a peculiar *form* of baptism is necessary, and claim *that all others* who do not use *that form* are *unbaptized*, and will not allow them at their communion table.

Another body of christians of equal respectability, and of large influence in this country, say in their "Confession of Faith:" "The visible church consists of all those throughout the world, that profess the true religion, together with their children; and is the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, *out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.*"¹

The same "Confession" says: "By the *decree of God*, for the manifestation of his glory, *some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death.*"²

¹ *Confession of Faith*, Ch. 25, Sect. 2. ² *Confession of Faith*, Ch. 3, Sect. 3.

"These angels and men, thus *predestinated and fore-ordained*, are *particularly and unchangeably designed*; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished."¹

Of the "elect," the same Symbol says: "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved but the elect only." *The rest of mankind*, God has pleased according to the unsearchable counsels of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice."²

"Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the spirit."³

These views, however *peculiar* they may be, are not commonly characterized as "exclusive," "uncharitable," or "illiberal," and those holding them are allowed to maintain and set them forward without any reproach or stigma from their fellow christians. Episcopalians only ask the same liberty in regard to their views. As the Bishop so justly says in his address to the Convention of 1822: "On the varying governments of other societies, our church pronounces no judgment. THE QUESTION IS, NOT WHETHER WE THINK CORRECTLY BUT WHETHER WE ARE TO BE TOLERATED IN WHAT WE THINK. IF THIS BE DETERMINED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE, WE MUST, TO BE CONSISTENT, INTERDICT ALL OTHER THAN AN EPISCOPALIAN MINISTRY, WITHIN OUR BOUNDS." And while we claim this *tolerance* for *our* views, we confess that the same should be granted to the views of others, and that whatever else we do, *all* should endeavor "TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT, IN THE BOND OF PEACE," to which end these pages are hopefully contributed.

¹ Confession of Faith, Ch. 3, Sect 4.

² Confession of Faith, Ch. 3, Sect. 6 & 7.

³ Confession of Faith, Ch. 10, Sec. 3.